



Dancing with wolves

Strategies for Young people to cope with old and new barriers in the defence of social rights in a turbulent context.

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Young person

- Youth: A condition and living experience constructed from contexts in which Young people live and act as political., historical and social subjects.
- Young people: individuals (between 14 and 35) whose life experiences are determined by personal characteristics (such as gender and ethnicity) , as well as living conditions , opportunities and lived experiences (Access to education, health, housing) that impose specific roles, functions and commitments





A turbulent context

Turbulence (n): a state of confusión without any order (Cambridge dictionary)

- Big waves.
- Difficulty staying in course
- Lights can be helpful to be identified and also help guiding to find a safe port, a safe shore
- Who churns up the waves?
- Is there anyone at the Helm?



Some elements of the context

- Isolation
- Divisive discourses and disinformation
- Widespread inequality (unemployment, housing, discrimination, precariousness, social exclusion)
- Democratic backsliding
- Violent conflicts.

Some efforts at international level are being made

- Youth participation is fostered (among others) in
 - Iberoamerican youth pact
 - African youth charter
 - European Union Youth strategy
 - Council of Europe charter on the participation of Young people in local and regional levels
- Youth global agendas and policy commitments consistently emphasize:
 - Meaningful engagement,
 - Prevention
 - Partnership
 - Young people ´s rights to organize and be Heard.



Old and new barriers

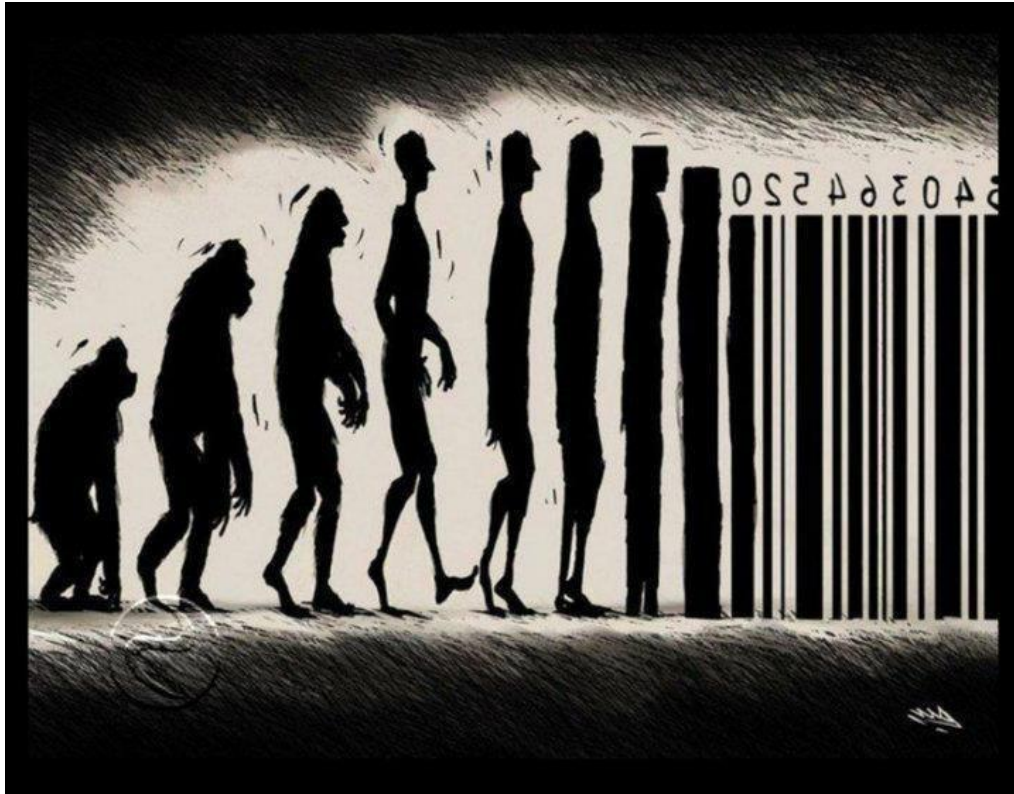
There is a concern that member states do not safeguard sufficiently young people's rights (Council of Europe Recommendation on Young people Access to rights CM/rec (2016/7)

Young voices are traditionally being confined to structured adult defined decision making spaces.

Young people are systematically excluded from policy design and decision making processes letting them marginalized. Their participation seems in many cases merely tokenistic

Sometimes NGO.s and CSO's play a dual role. On one side they support youth action but also unintentionally contribute to neoliberal economics that depoliticize civic engagement and action' (Alfa, Mitchell and Ramey 2026)

This entails several risks



- Disengagement
- Non taking up rights...
- Principles of Solidarity, equality and belonging to a common humanity. Are affected Also affects the building up cohesive and resilient societies
- Democracy is weakened



Three steps for coping with old and new barriers

Knowing and naming the reality (there is a moral commitment to know the reality) even if the Government, the market, the system doesn't facilitate.

Knowing the reality is much more than an intellectual exercise. It means to carry the burden of reality and bear it .

Critically analyze reality

To acknowledge reality and take responsibility for it as i see my place in this reality (discover the skills). From a human rights perspective

Take action. Address reality

Key benchmarks for a roadmap

- **Create** structured opportunities for young people and adults to name power, question instrumental assumptions and collectively examine how participation is being shaped.
- **Rethink** activism in order to
 - Identify to which extent governments civil society organisations and NGO´s shape systems, discourses and practices of young people activism.
 - Reassert young peoples agency in defining social and political objectives and driving social change
- **Promote** the knowledge and conscience of human rights among young people at the different educational levels and profesional stages
- **Impulse** a diferenciaded human rights based research that challenge assumptions that condemn youth people to ostracism and demobilization

A photograph of a vast field of tall, green grass under a hazy sky. In the center of the frame, a single red flower with white variegation stands out. The text "Thank you very much" is overlaid in white, centered horizontally and slightly below the flower.

Thank you very much

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